

MINUTES

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MEETING OF THE NATIONAL DISASTER SUPPORT TASK GROUP

1. The first meeting of the Task Group was convened by the Chairman, [redacted], OEP, at 2:00 P.M., 17 February 1970, at the U. S. Geological Survey Office at Reston, Virginia. STAT
2. [redacted] Deputy Director of the Survey, graciously welcomed the Task Group on behalf of the Director, [redacted] and expressed his feelings as to the appropriateness of the utilization of Reston for this Task Group's purpose. STAT  
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3. Introduction of the Task Group representatives and the agencies' representatives. (See attachment 1 for list of Attendees.)
4. [redacted] Security Officer, USGS, Reston, briefed the group on security matters. STAT
5. The Chairman reviewed the background of actions leading to the formation of the Task Group. He cited the Camille experience resulting in the initial photographic interpretation study, internal OEP staffing, and the consequent exchange of correspondence among the Directors of OEP, OST, USGS, and the Heads of the other agencies here represented. Attachment 2 lists the pertinent items of correspondence of reference.
6. In the discussion related to the OST memorandum of February 9, 1970, to the agencies concerned (item 6, Attachment 2), [redacted] NASA, commented that he would not feel able to agree that procedures developed for natural disaster applications would by themselves necessarily be a "model" for imagery analysis in the NASA Earth Resources Program; however, the experience gained by the application of such procedures would certainly provide useful guidelines. [redacted] USDA, concurred. STAT  
[redacted] DIA, remarked that, by their very nature, natural disasters do not lend themselves to any sort of standard reaction procedures, but all have unique characteristics. [redacted] observed that notwithstanding the relative newness of the approach and the variants of likely disaster events, the urgency of the problem dictates an early planned action program; furthermore, since there is nothing basically new in terms of photo analysis techniques, skills, operating procedures, etc., a mechanism or system is needed to pull these elements together for this given purpose. [redacted] STAT

OST, put it: "The hardware is available, what is needed is the software." [redacted] USDA, observed that within this general sense of urgency for determining the effects upon areas which have been disastrously affected, crop failures of large magnitudes fall within this framework, and he hoped that this type of contingency situation would also be considered.

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7. At 2:30 P.M., the guests from the Institute for Defense Analyses arrived and presented their briefing on command and disaster studies they have conducted concerning the Washington, D. C. Executive Command Center. The ensuing discussion centered on the problems of organization and response, communications and analysis, information and decision making. Their views pointed to the need for creating the environment to permit the convergence of information and the effective and coordinated use of available resources represent the continuation. It has been demonstrated in emergency planning experience that much is gained by utilizing resources and procedures in current and real situation problems (riot control, natural disaster response, and so forth). The learning value for large emergency situations (such as nuclear contingencies) is enhanced. Discussions followed relative to OEP/OCD relationships, other Federal agencies relationships, Executive Orders, and statutory responsibilities. At the conclusion of this discussion, the IDA guests left.

8. [redacted] OEP, reviewed the actions involved with the Camille photographic interpretation test study, citing aerial coverage sources, manner of interpretation performed, the relatively short periods of time involved with data extraction, and the report preparation; cited the advantages possible from a comparison of pre- and post-disaster photography. Discussions on questions raised by [redacted] as to pre-disaster data base, response time, specifications for coverage, budget and fiscal planning as well as cost reimbursements. Detailed answers to certain of the division of responsibility in disaster situations and the defrayment of cost involvements would hopefully be developed during the Task Group's deliberations.

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9. [redacted] then outlined his views on how the Task Group would proceed. He hoped that within a period of from six to eight weeks, considering the imminency of annual Spring floods, that the group would develop a set of procedures based on the various kinds of problems, the types of resources needed, the information needed, their priorities, etc.

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He hoped to be able to obtain approval from the member agencies, and in order to be able to make these recommendations meaningful, develop a test case either from existing data or a bona fide situation which would demonstrate the feasibility of the procedures developed by the Task Group. The suggestion was made that, during the coordination phase with parent agencies, it would be best to avoid, tactically speaking, sets of separate interagency agreements. Seeking uniform agreements to a single package would be more desirable.

10. For the next meeting, the Chairman requested that Task Group members come prepared to discuss pertinent available resources, current emergency reporting procedures, activation mechanisms, command nets in such situations, etc.

11. The meeting adjourned at 4:30 P.M., with the next meeting scheduled for Monday, March 9, 1970, at 1:30 P.M. at the USGS facility at Reston.

Respectfully submitted,



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ATTACHMENT 2

BACKGROUND CORRESPONDENCE

1. The Camille Photographic Interpretation Study, 9 August 1969.
2. Internal OEP memo to the Director and Deputy on the Use of Aerial Photography for Disaster Situations, 28 November 1969, which recommended:
  - a. Correspondence dated 15 December 1969 to [redacted] Director, Office of Science and Technology, suggesting the creation of a task group to examine and to recommend a program of inter-agency support in areas requiring remote sensing and related data acquisition, systems analysis, and procedures. STAT
  - b. Correspondence dated 15 December 1969 to Dr. Pecora, Director of the USGS, suggesting consideration of the use of the USGS Reston facility for imagery data analysis and report preparation of natural disaster effects.
  - c. Establishment of internal OEP "alerting" procedures, and a small in-house study group to examine specific information needs, timeliness, and related priorities; the group is to report, at least on a preliminary basis, by 1 July 1970.
3. Response dated 23 January 1970 from [redacted] supporting the initial OEP suggestion for an interagency mechanism as described, and inviting OEP to name the chairman for a task group to be immediately convened to look into the matter. STAT
4. Response by OEP at the ARGO Planning Group meeting 25 January 1970, naming [redacted], Chief, Resource Evaluation Division, National Resource Analysis Center, OEP, as the Chairman, with [redacted] (same Division) as alternate. STAT  
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5. Response dated 6 February 1970 from [redacted] supporting the OEP suggestion for the use of the Reston facility for interagency use for photographic interpretation analysis associated with natural disasters. STAT
6. Correspondence dated 9 February 1970 from [redacted] to Agency and Department Heads and Secretaries with ARGO-associated and related memberships requesting the designation of representatives by 10 February 1970 in order that the Disaster Support Group be enabled to hold its first meeting by 16 February 1970. STAT